

Cyber-stalking & Bullying TEACHER'S GUIDE

What teachers need to know:

The June 2000 *Online Victimization Report* by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children highlights the potential dangers of the Internet:

- **Sexual solicitation:** Unsolicited requests from adults to minors to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk; can turn aggressive and include "offline" requests, calls, meetings.
- **Unwanted exposure to sexual material:** Without seeking sexual material, children are exposed to sexual content when doing online searches, surfing the web, opening email or email links.
- **Harassment:** Threats, malicious gossip or other offensive behavior (not sexual) sent or posted online for others to see.

Important statistics from the report include:

- 20% of children who use computer chat rooms have been approached over the Internet by (sexual) pedophiles
- 89% of online sexual solicitations were made in either chat rooms or Instant Messages
- 1 out of 33 children who received sexual solicitations was aggressively approached (asked to meet, called via the phone, sent mail, money or gifts)
- Only one in four youth who had been solicited told their parents or authorities

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

- Determine what is private information
- Identify dangers of the Internet
- Analyze options for kids who are asked to share private information over the Internet

Materials:

- Paper and writing implements; black/white board

Project and Purpose:

1. Ask, *How do you and your friends use the Internet to communicate?* (Email, myspace, chat rooms, instant messenger (IM)). *Have you or someone you know ever talked online with someone other than a friend? Describe the person you talked with. How do you know the person was who he/she said he/she was?*
2. Remind students, *Regardless of what a person writes online, you can never be absolutely sure of the person's true identity. What someone tells you about him or herself may be a lie – you have no way of knowing! You are meeting a stranger online, just like you see lots of strangers when you go to the mall. Do you freely give away your name, where you go to school, or your address to strangers you meet at the mall?* Discuss.
3. Ask students to brainstorm a list of private or personal information they should never share with anyone online. Record their ideas on the board.
4. Ask, *What could be some of the possible consequences if you share your private information? What options do you have when asked to share your private information?*
5. Make a second list of options students can choose when asked to share private information online.
6. Read the following scenarios and have the students apply their list of options to each. You may use this as a discussion starter or use as a written assignment for homework.

Scenario 1: STEPHANIE'S PHOTOS

Stephanie has always wanted to be a model, and her mother finally took her to a studio to have professional photographs taken. They look fantastic! Stephanie has heard that if she sets up a website showing her photos with descriptions (height, weight, hair and eye color, clothing size, etc.), agents might see it and she could be discovered.

Scenario 2: ARI'S HOBBY

Ari watches a particular science fiction TV show every week, and is a member of the show's fan club. He has gone to the show's website and found chat rooms to talk about the characters and the plot lines and the actors. Someone in the chat room invites him to meet for coffee or a soda at a local bookstore to talk more about it and to swap trading cards.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. What information should kids never share online?
2. What does the phrase "the Internet is anonymous" mean?
3. What do police say parents and children should do to educate themselves about the dangers of chat rooms?

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Why do you think kids don't tell their parents about dangerous or mean things that happen to them online?
2. Would you do or say anything different online than what you would say in person? Why or why not?
3. How would you react if your parents installed Internet Safety Devices on your computer? Why? Could you understand their reasons?

Evaluation:

- Did students participate in discussion?
- Did students understand the concept of private information and what not to share?
- Could students list their options for not sharing private information?
- Did students apply their lists to the scenarios?